

February 9, 2016

Representative Mike Callton, Chairman, *and*
Members of the House Health Policy Committee
P. O. Box 30014
Lansing MI 48909

Re: **AARP Support for SB 352 (O'Brien)**

Dear Representative,

We are writing on behalf of AARP Michigan to express our strong support for **Senate Bill 352**, which would establish the Caregiver Advise, Record, Enable (CARE) Act in Michigan. The CARE Act is a commonsense solution to help support and better equip family caregivers when their loved ones go into the hospital and as they transition home.

In any given year, over 2 million Michigan residents will serve as family caregivers for an aging parent, spouse, aunt, uncle, friend or other adult loved one – helping them live independently at home, where they want to be. According to AARP research, Michigan's family caregivers provide nearly 1.4 billion hours of free care to loved ones which is valued at more than \$15.5 billion each year.

As chronicled in the October 2012 AARP Public Policy Institute report entitled *Home Alone: Family Caregivers Providing Complex Chronic Care*,ⁱ nearly half of family caregivers end up performing medical and nursing tasks in the home that once were in the domain of only doctors or nurses, often with little or no training.

The CARE Act would ensure that hospitals:

- *Record* the name of the family caregiver when a loved one is admitted into a hospital;
- *Notify* the family caregiver when the loved one is going to be discharged to another facility or back home; and
- *Provide* the family caregiver an explanation and live instruction of any medical tasks – such as medication management, wound care and operating medical equipment – that the family caregiver will need to perform at home.

Family caregivers shoulder great responsibilities. They are the first line of defense against older Americans being readmitted into hospitals or forced to move into nursing homes. They clean wounds, handle feeding tubes, give injections, and manage complex medications – in addition to

cooking meals, handling finances, doing the chores, and providing personal care like bathing and dressing.

Michigan families have a proud history of taking care of themselves, and the CARE Act is one way to help better equip families to do so. As a 2015 study by the *Journal of Healthcare Quality* concluded, adverse outcomes can be reduced significantly when hospitals adopt proactive, enhanced transition interventions to assure that family caregivers are well prepared when patients are discharged.ⁱⁱ And preventing unnecessary hospital readmissions reduces overall health care costs and saves money for taxpayers.

AARP Michigan urges you to support SB 352. If you have any questions or if there is further information we can provide, please feel free to contact Melissa Seifert at 517-267-8934 or mseifert@aarp.org. Thank you for your consideration and your work on this important issue.

Respectfully,



Paula D. Cunningham
State Director



Lisa Dedden Cooper
Manager of Advocacy



Melissa Seifert
Associate State Director, Government Affairs

ⁱ *Home Alone: Family Caregivers Providing Complex Chronic Care* (AARP Public Policy Institute, Oct 2012). http://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/research/public_policy_institute/health/home-alone-family-caregivers-providing-complex-chronic-care-rev-AARP-ppi-health.pdf

ⁱⁱ *Empowering Family Caregivers Assures Successful Acute Care Transitions* (*Journal for Healthcare Quality*, Jan 2015). <http://www.newswise.com/articles/empowering-family-caregivers-assures-successful-acute-care-transitions>

AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan 501(c)(4) social welfare organization that advocates on issues that matter the most to people age 50 and over, and their families. AARP has approximately 1.4 million members in Michigan. AARP does not endorse candidates for public office or make contributions to political campaigns or candidates.